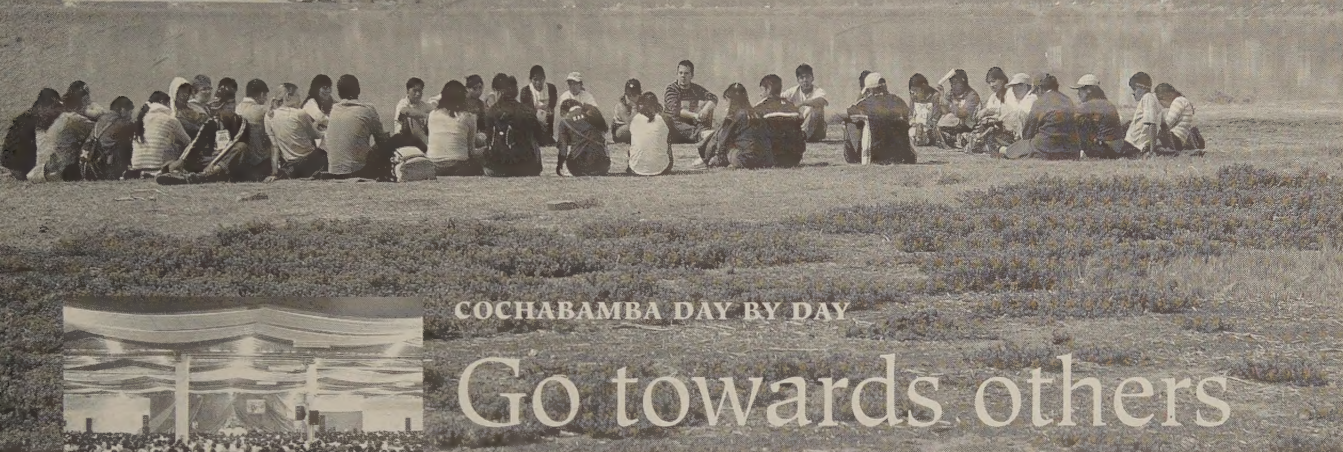
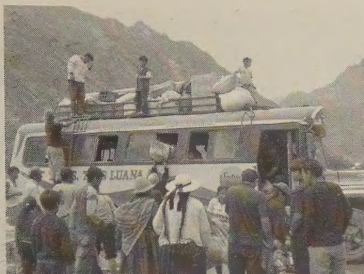


Letter from Taizé

n° 257 Bimonthly 0,50 euros December 2007 — January 2008/6



COCHABAMBA DAY BY DAY

Go towards others with few means

PROCESSED

NOV 27 2007

GTU LIBRARY

The Letter from Taizé will undergo extensive changes in form and content to complement the website better. Beginning in January 2008, it will be published four times a year. A new format, new paper, and a new layout will emphasize this updating.

In its first two pages, the Letter will continue the reflection begun by Brother Alois at the beginning of the year. The last two pages will offer reflections, inspired by the Bible, on questions of faith today. The short daily bible readings will be found in the double page in the middle.

The price of subscription will remain the same. Current subscribers will receive six issues before their subscription expires.

A brother describes the "days of reconciliation" that have just been held in Bolivia.

Tuesday 9 October

Yesterday and today have been overwhelming. We have to transfer our workplace to the exhibition hall. Over a hundred foreigners, Europeans and Latino Americans, have arrived already. It is impressive to see the expectancy of those who are arriving and the welcome the "Cochabambinos" are offering them.

There is no doubt; this is a people who know how to make each person feel that he or she is at home, wherever they come from. Their capacity for improvising can not be equalled. It is better not to program things too much, and see how things evolve as they go along. Yesterday, for example, the arrival times were very complicated: people arrived late, there were misunderstandings, but here everything is resolved through two

or three telephone calls. The capacity of these people to respond is surprising.

Today, three of us were speaking on three different TV channels at the same time. In this way we could reach all those who watch TV before work or school. The result was that both telephones at the welcome centre never stopped ringing throughout the whole morning, with offers of help in welcoming people on Wednesday and still more families offering to open their doors. There are many things that still have to be finalized and obviously we are worried about the welcome day on Wednesday. But if we think of all that has happened already, we have no right to be afraid. Like the people of Cochabamba, we will welcome with open arms... and we will improvise!

Wednesday 10 October

We began welcoming the arrivals early. At 6.30 there were already 300 people

waiting, most of them from Peru, Chile and Argentina.

During the morning, the flow of arrivals was fluid and calm, but as the hours passed this turned into a torrent. The "Cochabambinos" started arriving at midday, both from the city and the surrounding regions. They had left home that morning. This was the start of the "festival of colours", with all the young people from the rural areas wearing their traditional costumes. When the archbishop saw the arrival of a group from one particular rural area of Cochabamba, he was astonished. Just a month ago, he had been obliged to drop everything and rush to that area following a telephone call from the local priest. The people had caught a thief. Since the culprit had already committed another crime and the local justice had done nothing about it, the people wanted to lynch him. The priest managed to put off the execution, but only for a few hours. The presence of the archbishop calmed down the leaders and kept the sentence from being carried out. Today, the big surprise was to see nearly all the young people from that place full of joy and ready to take part in our days of reconciliation.

At 5 o'clock, the "welcome" queue and the "snack" queue got mixed up. Naturally the snack won.

The most "Latino" event of the day happened when it was time for prayer: five minutes before it started, a general power failure threatened to prevent it taking place at all. After several minutes spent attempting repairs, the people were invited by megaphone to come into the prayer hall, while the choir sang as loudly as they could. The thousands who had already arrived entered right away into a real spirit of prayer. In spite of all the emotion and improvisations, we could feel and let ourselves be filled by a great thirst for prayer and meeting one another. Indeed, it really is possible "to do much with almost nothing". We also had to improvise in order to continue welcoming the arrivals: in each of the five arrival points, cars with their headlights turned on provided the lighting.

Thursday 11 October

The parish churches have been transformed: the benches have gone and there is less light; there are icons around the altar, and many young people have come early to prepare for the prayer. The prayers are very simple, humble; it is the young people themselves who have prepared them, who lead them and share them.

Following the presentations, both of the parish and of the participants, everybody sets off for the "Campo Ferial", for the prayer. The "adventures" with the electricity are still with us, yet everything works out so that the prayer takes

place correctly. There is not enough room in the prayer hall: those who have to remain outside follow the songs and the Gospel reading closely. During the silence you can hear the proverbial pin drop; who would have imagined that people so joyful and festive could be capable of such interiority? For there is no doubt, they have great depth within.

This evening Brother Alois invites them to "struggle with a heart that is reconciled."

After a good meal, this desire to exchange with one another is clearly reflected in the high turnout for the "workshops"; everybody is there. The enthusiasm to share and deepen your faith can be easily observed. When the bells ring for prayer in the evening, the songs, slightly timid to start with, soon become like fire! "Nada te turbe, nada te espante. ... Solo Dios basta" reverberates around the hall as never before. It seems we could go on singing all through the night...

Saturday 13 October

Everybody is impressed by the diversity of the participants. Yesterday, during a meeting where introductions were made, there was enthusiastic applause for the 32 countries represented and for every region of Bolivia.

The midday prayer today was very beautiful. What touches people most is the silence. Even in Taizé it is not as complete as this! Coming out after the prayer and going towards the meal queues, you can hear the young people humming some of the songs: "Dios es Amor", "Nada te turbe". But the song they sing most is "Alleluia". During the prayer, each time the Gospel is proclaimed or another passage read, the sound of the Alleluia resonates very strongly.

It is beautiful to see to what extent intercessory prayer is a fundamental part of the liturgy here in Latin America. Praying for others is at the heart of each celebration. The Kyrie eleison is sung with the same vigour as the Alleluia and there is no doubt that God is listening to our prayer!

This afternoon we met by countries and regions. The meeting for the Bolivians was led by two brothers and by the national youth ministry, to express a continuity that has been started during these days. The Chileans, nearly three hundred of them, had their own meeting. At the end, they decided to start being reconciled without delay, through a gesture. They all came out of the place where they were meeting and went to interrupt the Bolivian meeting, in order to embrace them and give them the kiss of peace. This was a way of thanking them, but above all of asking forgiveness from them for all the problems that are still pending between the two countries.

The Brazilians and the Europeans

each had their meeting. Then there was the meeting for the rest of Latin America. Three hundred young people from the entire continent tried to find ways of continuing the pilgrimage of trust.

There were three lines of discussion: How can prayer be at the heart of my pastoral commitment? Giving a larger place to listening, putting ourselves in the place of others. Going towards the poor with very few means.

In the evening, Brother Alois alluded to the friendship God offers to us and gave copies of the icon of friendship to each country of South America represented and to each region of Bolivia. "This icon will help you accomplish small 'pilgrimages of trust' in the places where young people come together, from one city to another, from one parish to another, in a hospital or a centre for abandoned children, or in still other places where people are suffering. Through this simple means, you will be able to pass on the Good News of the Gospel and live the missionary dimension of our faith."

Sunday 14 October

Time to leave. Again there are backpacks everywhere! The Eucharist began at 11 o'clock in the morning. Once again the striking thing was the surprising interiority of these "turbulent" people. In his homily, the Bishop of Cochabamba, Tito Solari, spoke of the three fruits or lessons of the meeting: first of all Jesus is the guide, the companion on the way, with prayer and silence above all as the meeting place. Then he invited the young people to create "micro-climates of reconciliation" in the places where they live. Finally, gently and firmly he said that the young cannot go through life, nor go through history, without leaving a trace, without leaving a mark on the way.

At the end of the Eucharist, the Chileans insisted on giving the bishop a letter. It is an open letter from the young Chileans to the young Bolivians in which they ask for forgiveness. This was the most moving moment of the entire meeting. You could not say that the applause was very strong; people were much too preoccupied wiping their tears of joy.

Everything came to an end with the greeting of peace, which had been left until after the benediction. It was good that the meeting ended in this way. The last word many people said as they were leaving was, "Peace be with you".

Other articles on this meeting have been published on our website, www.taize.fr "Meeting in Cochabamba".

Holy Spirit, mystery of a presence, you clothe us in your peace; it comes to touch the depths of our being, bringing us a breath of life.

JANUARY

DAILY READINGS

- 6** ^{Mt 2:1-12} **SUN** **EPIPHANY**
When they saw the star, the wise men were filled with a great joy. As they entered, they saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they knelt down and worshipped him.
- 7** ^{Lv 26:3-13} **Mon** God says to his people: I shall fix my home among you and never reject you. I shall be your God and you will be my people.
- 1** ^{Mt 6:22-27} **Tue** May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord let his face shine on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord show you his face and bring you peace."
- 2** ^{Jn 1:1-18} **Wed** Of Christ, John writes: The light shines in the darkness, and darkness could not overpower it.
- 3** ^{Jn 6:35-40} **Thu** Jesus said: I have come from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of the one who sent me.
- 4** ^{Ps 104} **Fri** The earth is full of your works, Lord. You send out your Spirit and life begins, you renew the face of the earth.
- 5** ^{Is 64:3-8} **Sat** O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand.
- 13** ^{Mt 3:13-17} **SUN** When Jesus had been baptised, he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming down on him. And a voice came from heaven: This is my Son, the Beloved, my favour rests on him.
- 14** ^{Jm 4:6-12} **Mon** James writes: Give yourselves to God. Resist the tempter and he will flee from you. Draw close to God.
- 15** ^{Mt 7:7-14} **Tue** Jesus said: Enter by the narrow gate, for the road that leads to life is narrow.
- 16** ^{Is 45:3-7} **Wed** The Lord says: Though you did not know me, I have called you by your name.
- 17** ^{1 Tm 2:1-8} **Thu** There is only one God, and there is only one mediator between God and humanity, Christ Jesus, himself a human being, who gave himself for all.
- 18** ^{1 P 1:13-16} **Fri** Put all your hope in the grace brought to you by the revelation of Jesus Christ.
- 19** ^{Is 26:7-13} **Sat** Lord, you level the path of the just. As we follow the path of your judgements, we set our hope in you; you are the desire of our souls.
- 20** ^{Jn 1:29-34} **SUN** John the Baptist said of Jesus: After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me.
- 21** ^{Jn 3:22-36} **Mon** The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life.
- 22** ^{1 Th 5:4-11} **Tue** God has offered us salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that, whether we live or die, we may live united with him.
- 23** ^{Jn 3:1-8} **Wed** Jesus said: Unless a person is born from above, they cannot see the kingdom of God.
- 24** ^{Ga 1:6-11} **Thu** Paul writes: Am I seeking the approval of people, or that of God? If I were trying to win the approval of people how could I be a servant of Christ?
- 25** ^{Jn 8:28-32} **Fri** Jesus said: The one who sent me is with me. He has not left me on my own, for I always do what pleases him.
- 26** ^{1 Th 2:1-13} **Sat** Paul writes: We give thanks to God because when you heard the Word you received it not as the word of human beings, but for what it really is, God's word, which is at work in you.
- 27** ^{Mt 4:12-23} **SUN** Jesus said: Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is close at hand.
- 28** ^{Lk 6:27-38} **Mon** Jesus said: Give, and it will be given to you. A full measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap.
- 29** ^{Ep 2:11-18} **Tue** In Christ Jesus, you who were far away have been brought close.
- 30** ^{Is 66:12-14} **Wed** The Lord says: I am going to send peace to my people like a river. When you see this, your heart will rejoice.
- 31** ^{Ep 3:7-13} **Thu** Through the Church, the manifold wisdom of God is at work according to the plan he had from all eternity in Christ Jesus.

These short readings are those read, day by day, at community prayer in Taizé. The Bible reference given indicates a slightly longer passage.

Jesus, peace of our hearts, your Gospel comes to open our eyes to the fullness of your love: it is forgiveness; it is inner light.

3 ^{Mt 5:1-12} **SUN** Jesus' disciples came to him and he taught them saying: Happy are the poor in spirit, the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

4 ^{Is 30:18-21} **Mon** Isaiah said: The One who teaches you will hide no more and you will see him with your eyes. Your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk in it."

5 ^{Lk 8:16-17} **Tue** Jesus said: No one lights a lamp and then covers it under a bowl. Rather, it is put on a lamp-stand, so that those who come in may see the light.

6 ^{Mt 6:1-6} **Wed** **ASH WEDNESDAY** Jesus said: When you give, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your generosity is secret. And your Father, who sees all that is done in secret, will reward you.

7 ^{Lk 8:19-21} **Thu** Jesus said: My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and put it into practice.

8 ^{Ga 6:11-18} **Fri** Paul writes: May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 ^{Is 50:7-9} **Sat** The Lord is coming to my help. Who then can condemn me?

1 ^{Lk 5:12-16} **Fri**

A man with leprosy implored Jesus, saying, "Lord, if you are willing, you can cure me." Jesus stretched out his hand, touched him and said, "I am willing. Be healed!"

2 ^{Heb 2:5-18} **Sat**

PRESENTATION OF THE LORD Because Christ himself suffered when he was put to the test, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

10 ^{Mt 4:1-11} **SUN** Jesus said to the tempter: It is written, "One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

11 ^{Heb 13:14-19} **Mon** Keep doing good works and sharing your resources, for these are the kinds of sacrifice that please God.

12 ^{Lk 5:12-16} **Tue** Large crowds gathered to hear Jesus and to be healed of their sicknesses. But he often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

13 ^{Lk 22:24-27} **Wed** Jesus said: Those who are in authority over the nations lord it over them. But for you this must not be so. Instead, the greatest among you should act as if they were the youngest and the one who governs should be like one who serves.

14 ^{Ne 1:1-11} **Thu** Nehemiah prayed to God saying: Remember your words to your people: "If you return to me and practise my commandments, then, I shall gather you from the ends of the earth and bring you back to the place I have chosen as a dwelling for my name."

15 ^{Mk 13:5-13} **Fri** Jesus said to his disciples: When you are taken to be handed over, do not worry about what you will say. No, say whatever is given you when the time comes, for it is not you who will be speaking but the Holy Spirit.

16 ^{Ph 2:12-16} **Sat** It is God who, for his own generous purpose, gives you the intention and the power to act.

17 ^{Mt 17:1-9} **SUN** At the transfiguration of Jesus, the disciples fell face down to the ground, terrified. But Jesus came and touched them. "Get up," he said. "Don't be afraid."

18 ^{Ps 32} **Mon** I said: I will confess my fault to the Lord. And you took away my guilt and forgave my sin.

19 ^{Mk 3:13-19} **Tue** Jesus called to himself those he wanted, and he appointed twelve to be with him and to be sent out to preach.

20 ^{Jr 2:1-13} **Wed** The Lord said of his people: They have forsaken me, the fount of living water, and have dug themselves cracked cisterns that will not hold water.

21 ^{Mt 5:17-24} **Thu** Jesus said: Do not imagine I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish, but to complete them.

22 ^{Ps 42} **Fri** Why are you downcast my soul, and why do you sigh within me? Put your hope in God, for I will praise him yet, my saviour and my God.

23 ^{Is 53:1-12} **Sat** The Lord says: After the ordeal he has endured, my servant will see the light and be content.

24 ^{Jn 4:1-14} **SUN** Jesus said to the Samaritan woman: If you only knew what God is offering and who it is who is saying to you, "Give me something to drink", you would have been the one to ask, and he would have given you living water.

25 ^{1 Jn 2:12-17} **Mon** The world will pass away, but the one who does the will of God will remain for ever.

26 ^{Mt 9:18-26} **Tue** Jesus said to a woman he had healed: Courage, my daughter, your faith has saved you.

27 ^{Ps 109:21-31} **Wed** With thankfulness on my lips, I will praise the Lord before all people. For he stands at the side of the poor to save them from those who condemn them.

28 ^{2 Co 5:1-10} **Thu** We are full of trust, although we know that while we are living in the body we are exiled from the Lord; we advance by faith, not by sight.

29 ^{1 P 2:19-25} **Fri** When Christ was insulted, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats but placed his trust in the One who judges justly.

FEBRUARY

DAILY READINGS

These short readings are those read, day by day, at community prayer in Taizé. The Bible reference given indicates a slightly longer passage.

Holy Spirit, comforting Spirit, receive our simple prayer. We want to entrust everything to you, and to rejoice in what you accomplish in our soul.

2 ^{Jn 9:1-41} **SUN** Jesus said to his disciples: We must do the work of the one who sent me, while the daylight lasts. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

3 ^{Dn 7:9-14} **Mon** Daniel said: In a vision I saw one like a son of man and the people of every tongue and nation worshipped him. His kingdom is everlasting, it will never pass away.

4 ^{Mt 12:15-21} **Tue** In Jesus the words of the prophet Isaiah were fulfilled: "Look! My servant whom I have chosen. I will place my Spirit upon him. In him the nations will put their hope."

5 ^{Is 41:8-10} **Wed** The Lord says: Do not be afraid. I am your God, your help, your strength and your salvation.

6 ^{1 Th 1:1-7} **Thu** Paul writes to the Thessalonians: Despite great suffering, you welcomed the Word of God with the joy of the Holy Spirit, and so you became an model for all believers.

7 ^{Lk 11:27-28} **Fri** Jesus said: Happy are they who hear the word of God and obey it.

8 ^{Dt 32:1-4} **Sat** God is our rock, his works are perfect. All his ways are just.

1 ^{2 Co 6:1-10} **Sat** Paul writes: We are considered sorrowful, we who are always rejoicing; we are thought of as having nothing, we who possess everything.

These short readings are those read, day by day, at community prayer in Taizé. The Bible reference given indicates a slightly longer passage.

9 ^{Jn 11:1-45} **SUN** Jesus said: I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live.

10 ^{Mt 14:13-21} **Mon** Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, Jesus gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, who gave them to the people. They all ate and were satisfied.

11 ^{Ex 16:1-18} **Tue** In the desert, the people gathered the manna given by God. And when they measured it, they found that the one who had gathered a lot did not have too much and the one who had gathered a small amount did not have too little.

12 ^{Ep 6:10-20} **Wed** Draw your strength from God's power. Clothe yourself with the armour of God so that you can resist the tactics of the spirit of evil.

13 ^{Ga 3:23-29} **Thu** You are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

14 ^{Jn 13:1-15} **Fri** Jesus, knowing that his hour had come to pass from this world to the Father, having loved those who were his in the world, now loved them to the end.

15 ^{Is 61:1-3} **Sat** The Lord sent me to bring good news to the poor, to bind up the broken-hearted and to proclaim freedom to those in captivity.

16 ^{Mt 21:1-11} **SUN** PALM SUNDAY The crowds who went in front of Jesus and those who followed were all shouting: "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who is coming in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"

17 ^{2 Co 1:8-11} **Mon** Paul writes: When overburdened to the point of despair, we learnt to rely, not on ourselves, but on God who raises the dead to life.

18 ^{2 Co 5:13-17} **Tue** Christ died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for the one who died and was raised to life for them.

19 ^{Jn 16:20-22} **Wed** Before his passion, Jesus said to his disciples: Now you are sad, but I shall see you again and your hearts will be full of joy. And that joy no one shall take from you.

20 ^{Jn 12:20-30} **Thu** Jesus said: In truth, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies it remains only a single grain. But if it dies, it yields a big harvest.

21 ^{Ep 2:13-18} **Fri** GOOD FRIDAY Christ is our peace. He has broken down the dividing wall of hostility between the peoples and reconciled them to God in one body through the cross.

22 ^{Mt 10:38-39} **Sat** Jesus said: Anyone who gives their life for my sake will find it.

23 ^{Col 3:1-4} **SUN** EASTER DAY You have been raised with Christ, so set your hearts on things above. For you have died and now the life you have is hidden with Christ in God.

24 ^{Col 2:9-15} **Mon** Having been buried with Christ in baptism, you have also been raised with him, because you have believed in the power of God who raised him from the dead.

25 ^{Ep 4:1-13} **Tue** Christ descended to the depths of the earth, and he who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.

26 ^{Col 1:17-20} **Wed** Christ is the head of the Body, the Church. He is the Beginning, the Firstborn from among the dead, for God wanted all his fullness to dwell in him.

27 ^{Rv 1:1-8} **Thu** Jesus Christ is the faithful witness, the Firstborn from among the dead. He loves us and has washed away our sins.

28 ^{Ep 2:1-10} **Fri** When we were dead in our sins, God brought us to life with Christ.

29 ^{2 P 1:1-8} **Sat** God's promises have been given us so that we may share God's own nature.

MARCH

DAILY READINGS

30 ^{Jn 20:19-23} **SUN** The Risen Christ said to the disciples: "Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so am I sending you." Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

31 ^{Is 30:18-21} **Mon** God longs to show you his compassion, for he is a just God. Blessed are all who hope in him!

Lk 24:13-35

6SUN Having recognised the Risen Christ, the disciples of Emmaus said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"

Jn 9:22-23

7Mon God says: I am the Lord who acts with faithful love, righteousness and justice on earth. Yes, these are the things that please me.

Jm 2:14-26

8Tue As a body without a spirit is dead, so is faith without deeds.

Is 44:21-23

9Wed The Lord says: I have dispelled your offences like a cloud, and your sins like the morning mist. Come back to me, for I have redeemed you.

Ps 119:145-152

10Thu I am awake before dawn and cry to you for help, Lord. I put my hope in your word. My eyes stay open through the watches of the night to ponder your promise.

1 Jn 3:1-3

11Fri How great a love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called God's children. And that is what we are!

Rm 6:4-11

12Sat Paul writes: We believe that if we died with Christ then we shall live with him too.

1 Th 4:13-18

1Tue We believe that Jesus died and rose again, and that in the same way God will gather to himself those who have fallen asleep in him.

Jb 42:1-6

2Wed Job said to God: You have told me of marvels that are beyond my understanding. I knew you only by hearsay before, but now my eyes have seen you.

Is 51:4-11

3Thu The Lord says: Do not fear the threats of human beings, do not be frightened by their evil deeds. Those whom I have freed will return with singing, radiant with an everlasting joy.

Lk 24:35-48

4Fri The Risen Christ stood among his disciples and said: Peace be with you!

Is 40:25-31

5Sat God gives strength to the weary and the weak.

Jn 10:1-10

13SUN Jesus said: I am the gate. Anyone who enters through me will be safe: they will go in and out, and will find pasture.

Col 2:6-10

14Mon Paul writes: In Christ, all the fullness of God lives in bodily form, and in him you too find fulfilment.

Rm 7:4-6

15Tue Paul writes: Having died to what was binding us, we are released from the Law to serve in the new life of the Spirit.

Dt 30:15-20

16Wed Choose life: loving the Lord your God, listening to the Lord's voice, holding fast to him — for in this your life consists.

2 Co 5:1-7

17Thu Paul writes: We know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven.

Mt 13:1-9

18Fri Jesus said: A sower went out to sow. Some seeds fell on good soil and produced a crop — a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. Let anyone with ears listen!

Heb 3:1-6

19Sat We are God's household, if we hold on to our courage and hope.

Jn 14:1-3

20SUN Jesus said: Do not let your hearts be troubled. You trust in God, trust also in me.

1 P 1:22-25

21Mon Peter writes: You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God.

Ps 138

22Tue I thank you, God, for your love and your faithfulness; you have given new strength to my heart.

Ps 118

23Wed In my distress, I called to the Lord. God heard me and set me free.

Mt 14:22-33

24Thu Jesus came towards his disciples, walking on the water, and they were terrified; but at once he said to them: Courage! It is I. Do not be afraid.

Mk 16:15-20

25Fri St MARK Jesus sent out his disciples, saying: Go out to the whole world; proclaim the gospel to all creation.

Jn 12:23-36

26Sat Jesus said: When I am lifted up from the earth, I shall draw all people to me.

Jn 14:18-21

27SUN Jesus said to his disciples: In a short time the world will no longer see me, but you will see that I live and you will also live.

Lk 4:14-30

28Mon The Lord has sent me to bring good news to the poor and to proclaim freedom to those in captivity.

Col 2:6-13

29Tue Live your lives in Christ Jesus. Be rooted and built up in him, strengthened by the faith you have been taught and overflowing with thankfulness.

Is 26:19

30Wed Isaiah said: You who dwell in the dust, wake up and sing for joy: your dead will live.

Christ Jesus, give us a resolute heart that, in a simple prayer, tirelessly strives to discover a communion with God.

APRIL

DAILY READINGS

These short readings are those read, day by day, at community prayer in Taizé. The Bible reference given indicates a slightly longer passage.

What Is Distinctive About the Christian Faith?

Your Salvation Lies in Quiet

Although faith is generally seen as a religion, since it concerns our relationship with that Absolute called God, that notion does not seem to be very helpful in order to grasp its unique character. Should it then be called a *spirituality*? Yes, in the sense that it offers a personal and lived-out way of penetrating the meaning of life more deeply. This way, however, is not left to the discretion of each individual; it is not made up of elements that we can take or leave according to our own whims. It is a pilgrimage in the steps of Christ, and it sets the pilgrim necessarily in a relationship to all those who are walking along the same road.

Is Christian faith a *life in common*, then? This definition has the great advantage of corresponding to the life of the early Christians as seen in the New Testament. Still, we must immediately add that this shared life is far from being a simple human sociability; it is rooted in God. It is a sharing in the divine Life, a Life that is Love and thus Life for others. This common life is by nature inclusive, universal; it radiates outward to encompass potentially every human being. In this sense, the boundaries of the Christian community are not defined once and for all; in the final analysis they cannot be distinguished from the entire human family, or even from the whole of creation.

In its essence, then, faith in Jesus Christ can be defined as *the offer in progress of a universal communion or fellowship in God*. First of all, Christian faith, far from being a human undertaking, is essentially an offer or invitation coming from the side of God. This was already true for Israel of old: that nation drew its identity not from geographical or genealogical criteria, but from the free choice of a mysterious and transcendent God. With the coming of Christ Jesus, this quality is even more salient. In him, however unthinkable this may seem, the very Source of life comes to encounter us.

If the Christian faith is an offer coming from the side of the Absolute, the role of human beings is essentially to welcome the invitation and to reply to it. It is not up to them to define its contours. And if God calls, through Christ, to a sharing of life, to a communion, then this invitation is addressed to the most personal dimension of human beings; it seeks to awaken freedom in them. For all these reasons, such an offer is at the opposite extreme from every form of constraint. Any attempt to impose it by coercion, whether overt or subtle, is absolutely foreign to its nature.

Secondly, the Christian message is an offer in progress, in other words an invitation that is real and not theoretical. Just as Jesus communicated the essence of his message by his life given for us to the point of dying on a cross, disciples turn their own lives into the message they want to get across. Christianity is perhaps unique in that, if it is not to be emptied of its substance, there can be no dichotomy between doctrine and practice. On the contrary, the doctrine is identical to the practice, for in both cases it is a matter of communion with God and among human beings. If Christians do not practice love for others, if the Churches live in mutual indifference or competition, their preaching will inevitably remain a dead letter.

—Excerpt from *Short Writings from Taizé 3* (Brother John)

For thus said the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength. But you refused and said, "No! We will flee upon horses"—therefore you shall flee! and, "We will ride upon swift steeds"—therefore your pursuers shall be swift! (...) Therefore the Lord waits to be gracious to you; therefore he will rise up to show mercy to you. For the Lord is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for him. Truly, O people in Zion, inhabitants of Jerusalem, you shall weep no more. He will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry; when he hears it, he will answer you. Isaiah 30:15-20:

In the history of Israel, God asked two contradictory things of his people: not to flee before danger and not to count upon their own strength. Consequently, "We will flee upon horses; we will ride upon swift steeds" is the last thing that God wants to hear from their lips!

Israel's identity is that of a people who, slaves in Egypt, came out "with empty hands," with neither weapons nor baggage. The Exodus was possible because God himself opened a way forward where it did not exist. All Israel had to do was to let God lead it. But to be led, you have to accept both not to be in control of events and to face the danger as it is—passing through the sea rather than going back to Egypt.

There are many voices within us that would like to bring us back to Egypt: "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness?" (Exodus 14:11), protested the Hebrews to Moses while they were on the road. A part of ourselves prefers the comforts of slavery to the difficulty of facing the dangers of freedom.

Agreeing to go forward where there is no road, giving up control of events, counting on something more than one's own strength: that is the attitude the prophet describes with the words "quietness" and "returning." If salvation is found there, that is because quietness enables us to assume our own vulnerability and not to view it as an obstacle on the road to freedom.

Recognizing that we are vulnerable, without "swift steeds," means allowing the "God of justice" to act, to "answer when he hears us." Far from leading to passivity, this vulnerability gives us the boldness to go forward with no provisions or calculations.

In highly technological societies, where the fear of failure keeps people from running risks and where they always want to know beforehand what will happen, it is essential to rediscover the audacity of vulnerability. That is the invitation of the God of Israel, who "brings us out of the house of slavery" (Exodus 13:3).

— How do I react in situations when I seem to be out of my depth? What helps me to become calm again?

— Does my faith help me to agree to go forward where there is no road, to give up control of events, to count on something more than my own strength? In what way?

GENEVA 1942-1944:

"Testing-Ground for the Future Community in Taizé"

Geneva is not only the place where the thirtieth European meeting will be held, but also the place where the community life around Brother Roger began. Brother Daniel speaks about the two years when a few brothers lived in a flat in Geneva:

Brother Roger lived in Geneva from 1942 to 1944. That time in Geneva was a fallback position for the community, and especially for Brother Roger. Many things had already happened in Taizé between 1940 and 1942. The community's life had been initiated, not by the number of brothers, since Brother Roger was alone, but by the purchase of the house and the first work done there. Some of Brother Roger's activities in Taizé had been dangerous; he was encouraged to return to Geneva because for the first time his life was in danger. It was thus a period when he was forced to withdraw, but only for a time.

Brother Roger did not know for how long this would last: a year, two years, ten years.... There was no practical way to know how long the world war would continue, even though at Taizé everything was ready for the creation of a community. Confronted with such a situation anyone would have given up, whereas for Brother Roger it was the occasion for a truly creative life, on the fringe of his parents' flat in the Rue du Puits Saint Pierre, where the first brothers joined him. For my part I stayed in a small room in that house, and Brother Roger lived there as well. Max and Pierre were still living with their families.

Brother Roger had quickly become president of the ACE, the Association of Christian Students, with which he organized every year what was called a "spring congress". He came up with a topic for reflection and people gathered in Geneva, Lausanne or Neuchâtel for symposiums which allowed us to discuss the topics he was thinking about. That's how I got to know him. Very quickly, he spoke to me about his plans for community life and then he asked me if I wanted to join the rudimentary community.

At the same time, Brother Roger was gathering around himself, in the flat in the Rue du Puits Saint Pierre, what was called at the time "la grande communauté". With the overflowing creative enthusiasm of Brother Roger, that community came up with several types of activity and research. I can still recall

the three themes according to which all our friends who came to Rue du Puits Saint Pierre were divided up. The first theme, for the intellectuals, was called the "summa": it was a matter of summing up all the authentic values that animated our life as Christians. The second theme of research was the "itinerant ministry": Brother Roger had imagined that, as soon as it would be possible, people would be sent out by twos to preach the Good News in Switzerland or in France. The third theme was what we called at the time the "city of children". I had chosen the itinerant ministry; since I was studying theology I was directly concerned with ministry. But Brother Roger said to me, "No, you will take care of the city of children!" So I had to give talks in French-speaking Switzerland to announce this project, which would be put into practice in France and which took the form of adopting the children whom Genevieve, Brother Roger's sister, took care of when we returned to Taizé as soon as the war was over.

Alongside these three major themes that were dealt with in the symposiums of la grande communauté, Brother Roger already welcomed guests. Since he had always attempted to create contacts, we received many friends, more or less young, for evenings that began with a time of prayer, where the future liturgy of the community began to take shape. Then we all shared a meal where Brother Roger had imagined something that now seems perfectly natural: silence. Those meals in silence made news, since it was something completely new. It was not always easy; I remember one meal where one of the participants had brought a large cherry tart. Since the cherry-stones had not been removed, you can imagine the racket made by all those stones that fell on the plates during the dessert, in complete silence. Uncontrollable laughter brought an end to the silence that evening! You have to understand that eating a meal in silence was an event in those days. In the end, those evenings with all our guests were a kind of testing-ground for our future community life in Taizé.

To conclude, I would like to share a very personal memory. At the time, I was studying theology at Lausanne, and I traveled back and forth from Geneva every day, to ensure a presence at the Puits Saint Pierre. At the end of my second year of studies, there were exams. I had to revise my courses. Brother Roger was aware of this, and one day he offered to give me a hand. I was revising the course on the Church Fathers. Brother Roger's support was extremely helpful. He asked me what I was doing, and I gave him the names of the Fathers I was studying. And he began, not the work of a tutor, but to talk to me about the Church Fathers. He had a particular affection for some of them. What was extremely impressive to me was that he spoke about them as if he had just seen them, as if they had just had long conver-

sations. Personally I was in the midst of my readings, whereas I had before me a man for whom the Church Fathers were friends who inspired him and people that in some sense he knew personally. This was absolutely typical of Brother Roger: more than ideas, what mattered for him were personal contacts.

Brother Eric

(1925-2007)

On 17 October, Brother Eric went to be with Christ in the life of eternity. He was in his 82nd year. His health had been fragile for some time and the end came through a very brief illness, in the space of a few hours.

Born in Geneva in 1925, Eric de Saussure studied Fine Art in Paris and in Florence. He joined the Taizé Community in 1949, while it was still very small. He lived not only in Taizé but in houses of Taizé brothers in Algeria and USA. He was very gifted as an artist. Through his works – paintings, etchings, stained glass – he was one of the brothers who awakened a sensitivity to beauty that is so linked to the vocation of Taizé. His numerous stained glass windows are to be found in various countries; in particular, he produced the series representing the Christian Festivals in the Church of Reconciliation in Taizé. He was also responsible for the icons of the Cross and of the Virgin that for many years have sustained the prayer of pilgrims at Taizé.

Letter from Taizé

Annual subscription
Ordinary subscription: 6 (France 4, 5) Euros
Supporting subscription: 10 or 20 Euros

Means of payment:
by credit card Visa, Mastercard, Eurocard, Carte Bleue: send the number of your card and dates of validity to Taizé, and say what sum in Euros you wish to transfer.
by international Giro transfer in Euros addressed to: Letter from Taizé, IBAN: FR16 2004 1010 0700 6144 6M03 871, BIC: PSSTFR33.
by cheque in Euros to Lettre de Taizé, 71250 Taizé, France, made payable through Société Générale.

In certain countries it is possible to pay within the country:
Australia: \$12 - Letter from Taizé, Patricia Ho, P.O. Box 694 West Ryde, NSW 1585.
Canada: \$10 Letter from Taizé, c/o Lesley Santiago, 145 College Circle, Ottawa, Ontario, K1K 4S1.
New Zealand: \$15 - c/o Jenny Chisholm, 13 Arden Way, Wilton, Wellington.
UK: £4.50 - Letter from Taizé, c/o Nick and Jane SHIELDS, 42 Blenheim Road, St Johns, WAKEFIELD, W. Yorkshire WF1 3JZ.
USA: \$7 - Letter from Taizé, c/o Bruder, P.O. Box 1954, Lenox, MA 01240.
For Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden, write to Taizé to ask for the address in your country.

Asia: The Letter from Taizé can also be obtained in the following Asian countries. Contributions towards the cost of photocopying and postage will be most welcome.
Bangladesh: Letter from Taizé, P.O. Box 48, H.P.O. 2200, Mymensingh.
Cambodia: Fr. Sri Pramong Virachai, BP 123 Phnom Penh.
East Timor: CP 299, Dili.
Hong Kong: Ingrid Chan, Flat H, 14/E Tower 125, 11 Bay Street, Sheung Wan.
India: Letter from Taizé, c/o Brothers of Holy Cross, 47, St Mark's Road, Bangalore 560 001.
Indonesia: Sister Be Kien Nio, Biarawati Ursulin, Jln Angrek 60, Bandung 40114.
Japan: Isao Uematsu, c/o Yoda, 6-43-5 Shimoshakujii, Nerima-ku, Tokyo 177-0042.
Korea: English edition. Ordinary Subscription: 2,000 Supporting Subscription: 4,000 to: Letter from Taizé, c/o Hwa Guk Dong 105-51, Kang Seo Ku, Seoul 157-010.
Malaysia: Georgina Wong, N° 31 Jalan Wan Alwi 6A, Lihang 93750 Kuching, Sarawak.
Myanmar: Youth Commission, CBGM, 292A Pyi Road, Sanchaung PO, Yangon 1111.
Pakistan: Yaqub Sadeq, Catholic Church, Toba Tek Singh.
Philippines: Letter from Taizé, c/o 28 San Antonio Street, San Francisco Del Monte, Quezon City.
Singapore: Angela Lee, 79 King's Road, 268141.
Sri Lanka: Martin Costa, 31 Major Lalaka Fernando Mayatha, Kapuwatte Ja-Ela.
Taiwan: Anna Tang, Aurora Center, N° 9, Lane 71, Hang Chow S. Road, Sec. 1, Taipei, ROC.
Thailand: CYO, 122/6-7 Soi Naksuan, Nonsee Road, Yannawa, Bangkok 10120.

Correspondence: Letter from Taizé, Taizé Community, 71250 Taizé, France
e-mail: lettre@taize.fr www.taize.fr
News from Taizé by email twice a month free of charge: www.taize.fr/taizenews.php

Directeur de publication: A. Trochard, Edition et impression: Ateliers et Presses de Taizé, 71250 Taizé, France, CPPAP n° 0110K79608 - DL 1048



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024

